



STATE OF KANSAS  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**DEREK SCHMIDT**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEMORIAL HALL  
120 SW 10TH AVE., 2ND FLOOR  
TOPEKA, KS 66612-1597  
(785) 296-2215 • FAX (785) 296-6296  
WWW.KSAG.ORG

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Contact: Jeff Wagaman  
785-296-3459

[jeff.wagaman@ksag.org](mailto:jeff.wagaman@ksag.org)

**Attorney General Schmidt announces appointment of Kirk Thompson as KBI director**

TOPEKA – (June 2, 2011) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt today announced the appointment of Kirk Thompson of Topeka to serve as director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

“Kirk Thompson has devoted his professional career to Kansas law enforcement,” Schmidt said. “He has served in a rural sheriff’s office, in one of our metropolitan police departments and in almost every senior leadership position at the KBI. Kirk is a man of integrity, and he has the right experience and dedication to lead this vital public safety agency.”

Originally from Great Bend, Thompson began his law enforcement career as a deputy sheriff in the Barton County Sheriff’s Department. He then served almost 30 years at the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, starting as a field agent and eventually rising to associate director. Since 2008, he has served as a captain at the Topeka Police Department, where he heads the Professional Standards Unit. Thompson is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, serves on the board of directors for the Midwest Counterdrug Training Center, and is a certified public manager.

Thompson will succeed current KBI Director Bob Blecha, who will retire July 1 after 44 years in Kansas law enforcement. Blecha began his law enforcement service as Republic County Sheriff then worked his way up through the ranks at the KBI, serving 31 years, including the last 4 years as director.

“Bob Blecha has served Kansas generously and well,” Schmidt said. “I’m grateful for his long and distinguished service to Kansas and to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.”

The KBI is the principal criminal investigation agency for the State of Kansas. It operates the state’s criminal forensic laboratories, manages public safety information databases, and investigates crimes throughout the state. The KBI is structured as a division of the Office of the Attorney General. The attorney general appoints the director who must then be confirmed by the Kansas Senate. If confirmed, Thompson will be the 12<sup>th</sup> KBI director since the agency was established in 1939.

